



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney Eastern District of Arkansas

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CONTACT: Jane Duke
United States Attorney
501-340-2650

FINAL SWEEP IN OPERATION TIENDA HIELO NETS 9 ARRESTS

Little Rock – Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, along with William J. Bryant, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Little Rock District Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) announced today a final sweep of arrests in the four-year joint drug trafficking investigation operationally dubbed “Tienda Hielo” or “Ice Store.” The investigation, which primarily focused on methamphetamine trafficking in the Batesville, Arkansas area, was initiated by local DEA agents and the 16th Judicial District Drug Task Force in mid-2005 based on intelligence gathered in numerous other investigations. According to Duke, DEA agents became aware, through multiple sources, of a large-scale methamphetamine ring in Batesville that was distributing “ice”—which is methamphetamine having a purity level greater than 80%—from Mexico. The investigation subsequently revealed that the group was not only selling portions of the shipments locally, but was also transporting and re-distributing the drugs in other cities such as Memphis, Tennessee; Kansas City, Missouri; Des Moines, Iowa; and Indianapolis, Indiana.

Today’s arrests, which were made pursuant to federal complaints, include the following nine individuals: **Jose Fernando Tenorio**, age 32, of Batesville; **Luis Andres Tenorio**, age 31, of Batesville; **Noe Gayton**, age 39, of Batesville; **Israel Ceranda Venia a.k.a. Juan Pena**, age 24, of Batesville; **Sandra Milligan**, age 52, of Batesville; **David Cook**, age 52, of Clinton; **John Huff**, age 42, hometown unknown; **Katie Brokaw**, age 20, of Batesville; and **Valdimar Fabila Gonzalez a.k.a. Lorenzo Garcia**, age unknown, of Batesville. Several other individuals remain at large in connection with this case.

Including today's apprehensions, Operation Tienda Hielo has resulted in the confiscation of more than 100 pounds of "ice" and the arrest of 84 individuals, with 48 of those already having been convicted. Authorities were quick to point out, however, that this figure does not include many additional defendants that were charged as part of splinter or spin-off distribution cells from the organization. These splinter cases also resulted in significant other drug seizures of methamphetamine and marijuana. As a result of the Tienda Hielo investigation, authorities seized and forfeited assets valued in excess of \$400,000. To date, imprisonment sentences imposed for many defendants have been 10 years or more.

Duke stated, "Methamphetamine is a highly addictive and devastating drug. There is no way people are able to remain 'social' or 'recreational' meth users. It eventually overtakes every aspect of a person's life. We have seen case after case where people think they can use methamphetamine occasionally and still maintain a family, a career, a home, and their health. But, the addictive nature of this drug is such that you simply cannot. Eventually, the acquisition and use of methamphetamine completely consumes a user. Left in the wake are broken families, ruined careers, repossessed homes, and serious health problems."

ASAC Bryant stated, "This is another fine example of the teamwork of federal, state, and local authorities attacking the number one drug threat in Arkansas – methamphetamine."

Numerous federal, state, and local agencies participated in this investigation. These include:

The United States Attorney's Office - Eastern District of Arkansas, Assistant United States Attorneys Anne Gardner;

The Drug Enforcement Administration - Little Rock District Office, Fayetteville Resident Office, San Diego and Riverside, California District Offices, Des Moines, Iowa Resident Office, Indianapolis, Indiana District Office, and Nashville District Office;

The DEA Little Rock District Office Task Force Group One, which is composed of the following agencies;

Little Rock Police Department
Jacksonville Police Department
Pine Bluff Police Department and
The Arkansas Highway Police;

The DEA Little Rock District Office Task Force Group Two, which is composed of the following agencies:

North Little Rock Police Department
Benton Police Department
Pulaski County Sheriff's Department and

The Arkansas State Police;
The Federal Bureau of Investigation;
Immigration and Customs Enforcement ;
The Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigations Division;
The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ;
The United States Marshals Service;
The Arkansas Army National Guard;
The Arkansas Air National Guard;
The Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics;
The 16th Judicial District Drug Task Force;
The 2nd Judicial District Drug Task Force;
The 20th Judicial District Drug Task Force;
The 17th Judicial District Drug Task Force;
The Central Arkansas Drug Task Force;
The White County Sheriff's Department;
The Van Buren County Sheriff's Department;
The Independence County Sheriff's Department;
The Independence County Prosecutor, Donald T. McSpadden;
The Maumelle Police Department;
The Sherwood Police Department;
The Jonesboro Police Department; and
The Craighead County Sheriff's Department.